

2. (amended) The carrier composition of claim 1 wherein the clay of which the clay platelets are formed [is] comprises a saponite.

a1 3. (amended) The carrier composition of claim 1 [or 2] wherein the cogel comprises oxidic compounds of aluminum, silicon, and magnesium.

4. (amended) The carrier composition of claim[s] 1[-3] wherein the carrier composition comprises an amorphous support material.

a2 6. (amended) A catalyst comprising the carrier composition of claim[s] 1[-5] and at least one hydrogenation metal component selected from a Group VIB metal component, a Group VIII metal component or mixtures thereof.

a3 8. (amended) A process for converting heavy feedstock into middle distillates comprising contacting the feedstock at elevated temperature and pressure with hydrogen in the presence of the catalyst of claim 6 [or 7].

Add a new claim 9 to read:

N/E 9. A process for converting heavy feedstock into middle distillates comprising contacting the feedstock at elevated temperature and pressure with hydrogen in the presence of the catalyst of claim 7.

Respectfully submitted,

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